

## Nel and Van Zyl more confident for the Olympics

South Africa's two top 400-hurdlers, LJ van Zyl and Wenda Nel, are quietly confident of realizing their dreams at the Olympic Games in Rio after their participation at the London Diamond League Meeting.

Nel finished third in 54.47s, the second-best time of her career, and Van Zyl was fourth in his race in a time of 48.92s. His goal was to break 49 seconds before the Games.

According to Nel (Tuks/HPC) she was slightly nervous before her race.

“I made myself believe that I was running the semifinals at the Olympic Games and that I had to run the near perfect race to go through to the finals. I was psyched up to make a race of it right until the end and I now know that I am capable of handling pressure.

“I had a good start and was able to execute my stride pattern to perfection up to the last hurdle. I slightly over stretched going over the last hurdle, but that was probably because I was getting slightly tired.

“But all in all I am happy. Running the second-best time of my career so close to the Olympics shows that I am on track to give a good account of myself in Rio.”

The Tuks/HPC athlete's time of 54.47s is the joint sixth fastest time of the season so far.

The who's who of men's 400-hurdles competed in London. Kerron Clement (USA), who can boast with the second fastest time of the season so far, won in 48.40s. Javier Culson (Puerto Rico), who ran the fourth fastest time of the season, finished second in 48.63s and Yasmani Copello (Turkey), the third fastest time of the season, was third in London in 48.70s.

Johnny Dutch (USA), who went into the race with the fastest time, finished 7<sup>th</sup> in a time of 49.60s.

Van Zyl (Tuks/HPC) impressed with the way he accelerated over the last 150 metres.

“I am satisfied with the way my race played out. The one thing on which I still have to work during the next two weeks is to be faster over the last hurdle. There are one or two other little hiccups in my technique as well on which I need to work to ensure that I will be at my best in Rio.”

Carina Horn (Tuks/HPC) did well to qualify for the 100 metres final in London.

She had quite a good start in the heats and was in the mix right until the end, running a time of 11.15s. In the final she was off to a good start again, but unfortunately she slowed down towards the end of the race to finish in a time of 11.22s (8<sup>th</sup> place).

\*\*Taylon Bieldt, who is coached by Hennie Kriel (Tuks/HPC), seems to be making a habit of breaking South African records.

Yesterday, at the Junior World Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland, she finished third in her 100-hurdles heat in a time of 13.35s. She set a new South African junior record and qualified for the final as well.

It is the second time this season that Bieldt has improved on the junior national record. At the African Championships in Durban she ran a time of 13.47s.

Last year she won a gold medal at the Youth Commonwealth Games in Samoa. Her winning time of 13.18s improved on the South African Youth record.

Kriel predicts that the 17-year-old Bieldt has what it takes to become one of the ‘greats’ of South African athletics.